<u>Replace the paragraph beginning on page 19, line 13</u>:

Fig. 6 is a flowchart of a re-registration process of the SEM image as the template according to the embodiment of the present invention, in the case which the matching processes between the design data and the SEM image are performed in an arbitrary frequency, whereby the SEM image in the position highest in the correlation value among all the correlation values of the SEM images is re-registered as the template. Steps 601 to 604 and Steps 606 to 610 correspond to Steps 201 to 204 and Steps 205 to 209 in Fig. 2, respectively. The matching processes using the design data and the SEM image are iterated by an arbitrary frequency from Step 602 to Step 605, and then in Step 606, the SEM image in the position highest in the correlation value among all the detected positions is re-registered as the template. Accordingly, it is possible to select the SEM image high in the correlation value. When detection is performed a plurality of times. Steps 607 to 609 will be iterated by use of the template. Note that both processes shown in Fig. 4 and in Fig. 6 can be automated by computer programs.

<u>Replace the paragraph beginning on page 27, line 1</u>:

Moreover, in the conventional case of performing the matching process between the design data and the SEM images, it has been impossible to perform a stable matching process because the correlation coefficient becomes considerably small due to inadaptability to deformed parts between the design data and the SEM images. In response to the foregoing problem, the present invention performs the matching process to make up the deformed parts by use of the edge information in multiple directions and smoothing

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